



MEMO on Aims, Activities, Methods

FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION

Prepared by Leonard E. Read

THE PROBLEM State interventionism -- popularly called socialism, communism, Fabianism, nazism, the welfare state, the planned economy or whatever -- grows rapidly here in the U.S.A. and elsewhere not because this "progressive" ideology lacks opponents but because there are so few who adequately understand and can competently and attractively explain interventionism's opposite: the free market, private property, limited government philosophy and its moral and spiritual antecedents. Many have forgotten the real reasons for the freedom and the outburst of creative energy that has marked America.

OUR TASK FEE's assignment is for the Staff, and the growing number of individuals who voluntarily associate with us, to specialize in better understanding this philosophy ourselves while exploring ways of explaining it with ever-improving clarity -- the resulting studies being available to all persons in whom sufficient interest can be aroused to request them. In short, we specialize in aiding those who would become more skilled and eloquent explainers of the freedom philosophy. Basically, our educational task is:

1. To stimulate a desire for such understanding, and
2. To prepare studies that will help in satisfying this desire.

Some of our activities, such as speeches, are useful in arousing a spirit of inquiry. Others -- journals, books, lectures, weekend seminars, intensive, one-week seminars for teachers, and the like -- are designed as grist for inquiring minds.

METHOD Replacing interventionist notions with the freedom philosophy -- the only possible antidote to an expanding socialism -- involves more than a mere belief in freedom ideas. Involved, also, are the means used to bring about the replacement. Unless proper educational methods are followed, all efforts on behalf of freedom are doomed to failure.

FEE's uniqueness rests on the method advocated: self-improvement. By reason of our 26 years of persistent emphasis on the improvement of self -- as distinguished from attempts to reform others -- there are today, in numerous walks of life, persons who serve as *wellsprings*

of understanding and exposition. These persons are not so much trying to "reach the minds" of others; they are trying first of all to achieve a quality in their own minds that others will reach for. They know that the educational process is one of "taking from"; that they must, therefore, have something in store to be taken. Our whole aim is to get as many individuals as possible to join us in this search for right principles and the competence to write and speak about them. Only as this improvement-of-self corps increases in quality and quantity can the free market and individual liberty be more nearly approximated and interventionism and its monetary offspring, inflation, be arrested.

WHAT WE DO We do not tell anyone how to run a war; instead we try to explain how the free market makes for social harmony and peace. We neither approve nor disapprove political parties; instead we present the rationale of limited government. We take no sides on legislation; instead we set forth the broad principles that should underlie all law. We have no "anti-communist" projects; indeed, we demonstrate the similarities of democratic and totalitarian socialism and offer as the only antidote the practice of free market, willing exchange, private property, limited government principles.

THE FREEMAN Few persons can become really skilled expositors of freedom without regular exercises in free market, private property, limited government thinking, writing, speaking, and reading. Hence our 64-page monthly study journal, *THE FREEMAN*. This is sent to anyone -- student, teacher, cleric, housewife, businessman or whomever -- on request. Being interested in the dissemination of ideas, we let it be known that most of the material may be used, with or without credit, and without further permission. Quite a few write, "*THE FREEMAN* gets better each month," perhaps because a lot more of them are reading it thoroughly. Dr. Paul L. Poirot is Managing Editor. Offerings of articles and essays are encouragingly on the increase, as is the reprinting of them, and the quality is definitely up -- the best straw in the wind as to how we are doing. The monthly printing averages 50,000.

DEVELOPMENT We invite the many thousands who voluntarily associate with us to nominate for our mailing list individuals who are personally known to be interested in and favorable to the freedom philosophy. These nominees receive our publications for one year and each is given the name of his sponsor. No charge to nominee or nominator!

DEBATES Each year there is a single topic selected for debates in the colleges, and another topic for high schools. Quite often the Affirmatives are cast in a socialistic vein. Example: "*Resolved: That the federal government should guarantee a minimum annual cash income to all citizens.*" Material in support of intervention is in abundant supply but there is all too little literature that supports economic freedom. Mrs. Bettina Bien Greaves each year corresponds with all college and high school debate coaches and offers material that explains the private enterprise thesis. Debate coaches are in need of this help and welcome our offerings -- for which we make no charge.

BOOKS

When FEE started in 1946 writers who presented free enterprise ideas and facts could scarcely find a publisher. Now, volume follows volume off the press. FEE's Freedom Library -- a collection that includes the works of others as well as our own -- presently numbers more than 100 volumes and ranges all the way from such easy reading as Hazlitt's *ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON* to the recently revised monumental and difficult *HUMAN ACTION* by Ludwig von Mises.

Numerous important books "go out of print." These titles must be preserved or are lost to most students and scholars. Monetarily, these never pay out. We refer to this project as "Preservation of the Titles."

Few worthy movements ever made headway without a literature. The freedom philosophy now has a rapidly evolving literature. The rationale of the free market, private property, limited government way of life -- written in modern American idiom -- not only exists but is easily available to anyone. See our catalogue, *A LITERATURE OF FREEDOM*.

SEMINARS

After years of trial and error, we feel we have now learned much about the limitations and possibilities of seminars. If "the team" (3 to 5) is tops in extemporaneous explanation and discussion; if the participants (20 to 60) are anxious to become articulate talkers and writers of free market ideas; if the seminar's sponsors are highly respected; if the physical facility for such a "Retreat Weekend" is secluded and away from the hurly-burly of social and business affairs -- then the possibilities are unbelievably good.

During 1972 we conducted three weekend seminars at FEE, one being composed of carefully selected undergraduates from around the nation with board, room and tuition hosted by FEE. In addition, weekend seminars were conducted in California (2), Washington, Utah, Georgia, Missouri, Wisconsin and Illinois.

For twelve years we have been gaining experience and winning interest in our 1-week, intensive Summer Seminars. This past summer we held four of these -- 114 participants, mostly high school and college teachers from 32 states, and from 2 foreign countries. Dr. W. M. Curtiss of the FEE Staff is the Director.

LECTURES AND SPEECHES

About 30% of my time is devoted to lecturing, mostly in this but some in other countries -- roughly 70,000 miles of travel annually. The Reverend E. A. Opitz is an effective lecturer and accepts numerous engagements. And we are ably assisted by such nonstaff lecturers as Dr. Benjamin A. Rogge and Dr. Hans Sennholz. Audiences range from small discussion groups to assemblies of 1,500 and include college students and faculties, farm and business organizations, clergymen, foremen, secondary schools, and the like. In each instance, a few begin a personal program of study. From among such as these come tomorrow's leadership for freedom.

As FEE progresses in its educational objective, more staff research and writing is farmed out, that is, done on a retainer or free lance basis. Among our off-the-premise associates are Ludwig von Mises and John Chamberlain. This has many advantages, including economy.

Why do we occasionally lecture and conduct seminars in other countries? First, freedom ideas are wanted by these people. Second, because it is important to our own freedom for these ideas to have skilled expositors in other lands. Third, because ideas have no respect for geography; they are as useful to us coming from Buenos Aires or Caracas as from Chicago. They radiate as effectively from one point of origin as another.

COLLEGE STUDENTS We have numerous ways of emphasizing each year to college students that any one of them on any campus may receive much of FEE's material, including *THE FREEMAN*, for the asking. We maintain a policy of supplying many of our studies and publications to teachers and students who want them, whether or not they are in a position to pay for them.

THE REMNANT This is the name selected by an independent fellowship of ministers launched by Mr. Opitz. Several 3-day seminars and a number of luncheons around the country are held annually. For information, address The Remnant, 30 South Broadway, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York 10533.

NOTES FROM FEE This 4-pager -- six issues annually -- presents the FEE theme of improving self as opposed to reforming others. It serves as our medium to announce important books, and its reply envelope offers the opportunity -- nothing more -- for the nondonors on our mailing list to become donors.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS Formal publications, like *THE FREEMAN*, have general as distinguished from personal attributes. Much of the staff's time is given to a heavy personal correspondence. Quite often we do hours of research and discussion in order to answer a single letter thoughtfully.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT Since we are dedicated to the rationale of voluntarism -- freedom of choice and willing exchange -- we rely on the theories we preach for FEE's financing. No FEE staffer knocks at your door asking for support of any kind. Instead, all of us keep the eye on understanding and explaining the freedom philosophy, confident that such support as is deserved will be forthcoming. We leave the initiative where it belongs: (1) with us, in pursuance of educational efforts and (2) with the owners of funds, and their evaluation of our efforts.

Presently, there are about 10,500 individuals, firms and foundations who, on their own initiative, send annual contributions ranging from \$5.00 to several thousand dollars, averaging about \$50.00. Thus, we demonstrate that the principles of voluntarism work in practice. FEE receives precisely what it deserves.

(Contributions deductible for income tax purposes)

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